

HANDLE WITH CARE Week 3!

Scripture used: [Psalms 78:1-4 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon focused his message this week on our responsibilities as parents and parent figures. He means this is the broadest possible way. His great-uncle and great-aunt were the ones who raised him and God used many other people to shape who he is today. There were teachers, pastors, and friends who invested in him when he really needed it. The same was true of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, who we celebrate this Monday. Dr. King was raised by an incredibly strict father, and eventually built on that legacy to have a greater impact than anyone could possibly have imagined. God used Dr. King to do wonderful things for our country, which was only made possible because the people in his community invested in him as a child. We all share the responsibility to positively impact the next generation, even if we're not parents. This week's message is for all of us!

KEY POINTS

- 1) **God commanded us to invest properly in the next generation.** In [Psalms 78:5-6 \(NLT\)](#), God explained how each generation was expected to instruct the next. This was meant to be a never-ending cycle. [Psalms 78:3-4 \(NLT\)](#) describes the way we must share the "stories we have heard and known" about "the glorious deeds of the Lord." These stories become the foundation for children as they make their own choices about the kind of lives they want to lead.
- 2) **Parents must not become the peers of their children.** There is a troubling pattern in many modern families. Parents reverse the traditional roles and use children to take care of their needs! If we're their friends, then we've robbed our children of their parents. Every child needs parents to facilitate the process of maturing and becoming independent. Of course we all feel the temptation to keep our kids in a bubble. It's tempting to protect children from everything in the world, but that ultimately destroys their ability to function on their own.
- 3) **Parents need to be affirming.** It is our responsibility to validate the feelings of our children. We can't minimize or downplay their struggles. Instead we can respond with "Oh, I imagine that was difficult. Tell me more." Parents can build on this by looking for opportunities to build trust. Slowly but surely, give the child more opportunities to make their own decisions. We must also focus on the positive. God started off Jesus' ministry by praising Him. In [Matthew 3:16-17 \(NLT\)](#), God said Jesus brings Him "great joy," which is something every child wants to hear. Finally, we must control our own emotions. This was best said in [James 1:19 \(NLT\)](#): be "quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry." Our children will benefit so much from the affirming example we set for them.
- 4) **Parents need to be present.** Being affirming with words is one thing. We must complement speech with action. Research shows that 20 minutes of quality time per day is a good target to help our children develop. Try to find at least one hobby or activity to do with them. Go to their games, their competitions, their practices, their meets, their spelling bees, and their parties. Our children only pick up the values we model for them. They don't absorb the values we merely preach about. That means if we are there for our children, then they will be there for others.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Do you think of yourself as someone who benefited from good parental examples or who suffered from bad parental examples? Which stories about your childhood do you tell to justify that?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Who are the people looking up to you? What does it mean to invest properly in them? Discuss at least three ways you can be both more affirming or more present in the lives of the next generation.
- 3) **DO** - Pastor Hurmon instructed us to commit to the affirmation "I will invest my best in the next generation!" Choose a single person in that next generation and commit to a specific activity you will do with that person this week. Share it with others and ask them - and God - to hold you accountable.